

OSCAR SAMUELSON OSCARVILLE, ALASKA

The tokens may say “Bethel,” but Oscar Samuelson actually conducted business from “Oscarville” (recognized by the *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*) across the river from the village of Napaskiak, six miles south of Bethel. “*Napaskiak: An Alaskan Eskimo Community*” by Wendell Oswalt, University of Arizona Press, 1963, has a little information about Samuelson.

“About 1908 a government mail carrier named Oscar Samuelson and his wife came from the Bristol Bay area to settle in Napaskiak for a few years. Then they moved across the river, where he opened a store and remained as a trader until his death in 1953. Since that time the store has been managed by one of this daughters and her husband. After the Oscarville store was opened, a few families settled near it, and a small Yuk village has been maintained there since that time (page 10).

“When the BIA representative first came to Napaskiak to open a school in 1939, this organization was committed to the policies established by the Indian Reorganization Act as it was extended to Alaska in 1936. One of the features was to encourage communities to form their own councils and request the federal government to recognize the council. One of the attractions for organizing, as presented by the teacher, was that after a community had recognition it could obtain federal aid in opening a village-owned-and managed cooperative store. This was an inducement to many villages to organize because they thought themselves unjustly treated by the local trader. Such was not the case at Napaskiak, where the people were quite satisfied with the fairness of the Oscarville trader, Samuelson. (page 67).

“Just before his death Mr. Samuelson arranged for a capable Eskimo storekeeper who had assisted him to manage the store for a year after the owner’s death. However, following a disagreement over management, the Eskimo storekeeper was discharged by Samuelson’s daughter who was heir to the store. With the aid of her husband the daughter then assumed ownership and management of the Oscarville Trading Post. The former Eskimo storekeeper was then financed by a Bethel trader in opening a store in Napaskiak, but after about a year the Bethel trader withdrew his support and the store closed.

“During the period of change in management of the Oscarville store and probably before, some men began to trade their furs for supplies in Bethel, where prices were often lower and where they had a greater variety of goods from which to select. The new management in Oscarville attempted to compete with the Bethel stores by stocking a greater variety of items and reducing the large standing inventory. Today most people still trade primarily with the Oscarville trader, but there are clear indications of a change.” (pages 72 and 73).



EDITORIAL

Once again, a change in plans. I was planning on running the article on the gold 1965 Fairbanks Coin Club coin convention medal this issue. Well, my memory and some one else do not match, so I need to a bit more research.

I hope that you find the article about Oscar Samuelson interesting. I remember reading "Napaskiak" in a class I took up at the U when I first came to Alaska in 1974.

Probably the most interesting feature this month is the listing of items in the Lyn Knight auction (page 38). A couple of "seal skin" notes, and a leather note from Siberia. I think the documentation on this piece would be very interesting. Think I will fire off an email to see if I can find out anything more than is in the lot description.

Well, it is a hot day in June, this is almost ready to go. I'll keep it short this time.

PRICES REALIZED

Stacks: May 7,8.

Lot 1296: Set of 3 AYPE gold. **\$460.**

Lot 1297: Set of 3 AYPE gold. **\$460.**

Lot 1298: Set of 3 AYPE gold. **\$460.**

Lot 1299: ¼ and ½ DWT AYPE gold. **\$230.**

CAA-Heritage: May 17-18:

Lot 3105: First National Bank of Fairbanks, \$5 Red Seal, choice crisp uncirculated. **\$28,750.**

See page 38 for lots, descriptions and prices realized from the Lyn Knight June 13-15 sale.

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AR NOT AK



The food stamp tokens shown above say Cove, AK. They are in fact from Cove, Arkansas. Thanks to Kaye Dethridge and Irene ... sorry Irene, but I forgot your last name, for ferreting out this information. And, it is time I gave you guys a plug. Check out their web site at www.alaskatokens.com.

1/4 OZ. SILVER/GOLD MULE



"One Half Troy Oz. .999+ Fine Gold"



Clouds, no fineness statement.



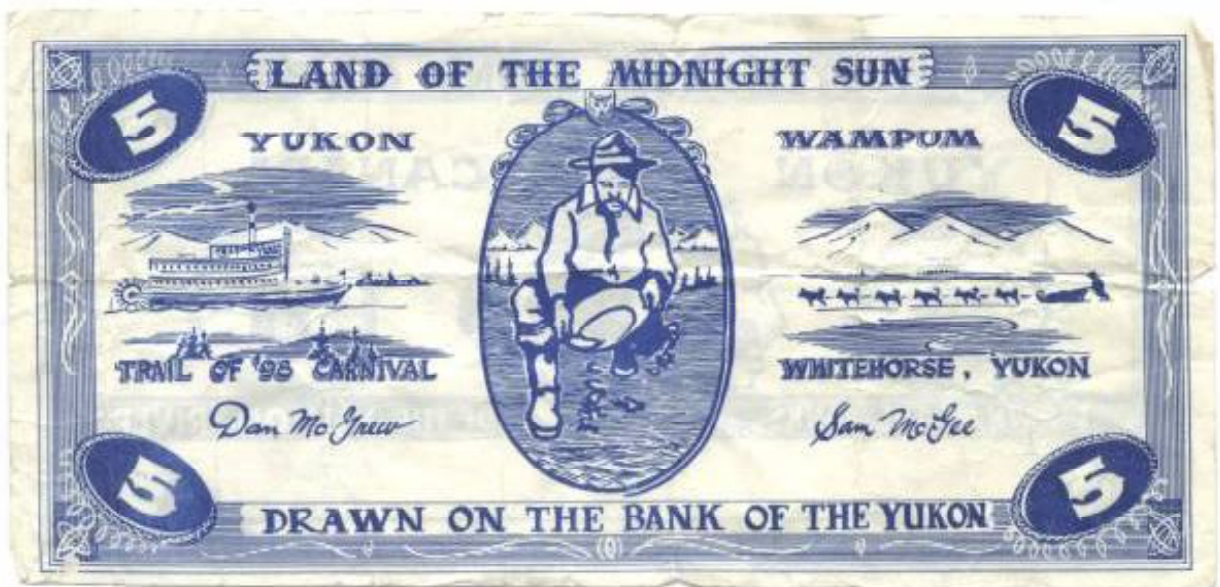
".999 Fine"



1994 ¼ ounce silver medal shown actual size bearing the "One Half Troy Oz. .999+ Fine Gold" legend.

We offered a set of three 1994 ¼ oz. silver medals in our spring auction realizing \$55. We have one more set available, and will sell that for \$55. We have one additional ¼ silver medal with the gold content statement available for \$35. Postage is \$3 per order, and can be combined with other items offered in this newsletter.

YUKON PAPER POTPOURRI

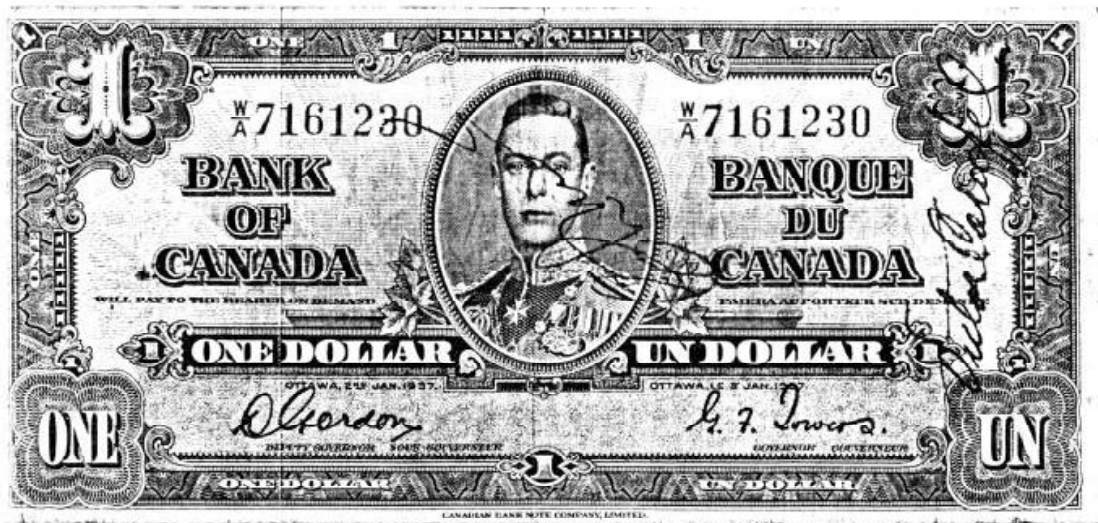


WHITEHORSE: Lions International/Whitehorse Lions Club, "Drawn on the Bank of the Yukon", gambling scrip. Unlisted denomination in Hill-Simpson. Blue on white, 160mm by 76mm.

WHITEHORSE: Westmark K.I. (Klondike Inn) Coffee Card, buy 9, get the 10th free. Brown and black on a tan base that appears to have a very light printing of a map in the background (submitted by Jim Robb).



YUKON PAPER POTPOURRI



A neat Short Snorter from World War II, circa the construction of the Alaska Highway (Alan Weinberg).



WHITEHORSE: Tags Food and Gas, 2¢ off/litre with fill up. Blue and red on white, 156mm by 70mm. (submitted by Jim Robb).

FOR THE RECORD



(ANCHORAGE): Alley Cat. Yellow poker chip (submitted by Kaye Dethridge).



DOUGLAS: R.R. Hubbard, 5¢ in trade. B-20a. Listed, not illustrated (Alan Weinberg).



KODIAK: Spanky's Beachcomber Kitchen, \$1 in trade. Gold on black plastic, 38mm (Kaye Dethridge).



SEWARD: First Video, Five Wooden Nickels. Black on wood (eBay).

SITKA: Moose Lodge 1350/Legion of the Moose No. 72. Aluminum with copper color center on the reverse, 39mm (eBay). Illustrated at the top of the next column.



VALDEZ: Club Valdez, One Drink \$1.00. White on green plastic, 31mm. Reported previously, but the reverse illustration was lost from our 2nd Ten Year Volume (Kaye Dethridge).



YAKUTAT: St. Elias Packing Co., 50¢ in trade. Unlisted denomination. Aluminum, 30mm (Alan Weinberg)



ALASKA & MEXICO: Cunard Princess, Alaska & Mexico Cruises. Brass, about 1.75 inches (eBay).

LYN KNIGHT SALE

Some outstanding and interesting lots from the Lyn Knight sale - June 13-15 (actual sizes not noted). Descriptions are taken from the auction. It appears that several items did not meet the reserve.



Lot 1145: **Siberia, NL THREE PIECE LOT.** Unrecorded leather money-may be official. 4 Kopeks-square; 5 Kopeks-pentagonal (5 sides); 7 Kopeks-heptagonal (7 sides); ie, the denomination of the piece determined its shape. Crown at top, value and date at center. Nothing more is known about them at this time. Avg. EF+ (4,250-5,500) **PR -n/s**



Lot 1146. **Siberia NL 50 Kopeck 1816 "Ussuri Boards"** This was a forerunner of the Alaska sealskin notes made during the same period by the Russian-American Company. At present, it is believed that this is the only piece recorded in a private collection in the West. This round leather ticket is printed in black on yellow background-signature initials G.T.G. at center. Around the border is Russian inscription translating to "due date to 1st January, 1816." Back printed in blue with numeral 50 surcharged in black. Tiny thin spot at center. A most important and unusual item! VF (3,750-5,000) **PR -n/s**

Lot 1147. **Siberia Ryab. #23316 10 Rubles ND (ca. 1919) American Grill, Vladivostok (local issue).** Blue on white paper; red denomination. Unsigned. Used by American interventionists fighting the Bolsheviks in Siberia. English text reads "Tnis (this) is not good for ever." Special item connecting these two areas. EF (450-600) **PR - \$633**

Lot 1148. **Siberia NL 50 Kopecks/1 Rouble ND (ca. 1919) Y.M.C.A. canteen** The 1 Rouble denomination has been crossed out and became a 50 Kopek note. Text reads: "Good only when presented at Y.M.C.A. canteen by allied soldier or sailor in uniform." Issued by anti-Bolshevik interventionists. Edge nicks, small holes. Several different varieties exist; none are generally seen on the market. VG/Fine **PR - \$259**



Lot 1286. **NL 10 Rubles ND (ca. 1850) Russian-American Company.** An example of the famed "Alaskan sealskin" emissions. There were several issues from 1816-1858, according to The Alaskan Parchment Scrip of the Russian American Company 1816-1867 by Randolph Zander (published by the Russian Numismatic Society). However, few or no survivors exist for early issues. This source states that the Russian-American Company, possibly influenced by the Hudson's Bay Company, was established in 1799 under the protection of the czar. The Company's general headquarters, first at Irkutsk, moved shortly thereafter to St. Petersburg. Double headed eagle in Russian-American Company seal; value spelled out beneath seal/Russian legend, denomination, and serial number in oval and rectangular block for Director's signature beneath on back. This piece came from a group gathered in Alaska around 1867; while this piece has seen circulation, design characteristics are legible. All sealskin notes are extreme rarities and have long been popular for collectors. The occasional example that shows is almost always a lower denomination; the three higher values have appeared only once previously on the market. Zander lists a total of 68 pieces from the 10 Kopeck to the 1 Ruble; a total of only 10 of the 5, 10 and 25 Roubles are listed. Of these 10 listed, six are the 10 Ruble denomination (four of the six are in museums). Outside of the Zander list, there is only one more 10 Ruble that has surfaced privately-the only one known not in this auction! This specific example is black on pink skin; it is the only example of its type in collectors hands. A very special opportunity. VG (11,500-17,500) **PR - n/s**



Lot 1287. **NL 10 Rubles ND (ca. 1850) Russian-American Company.** As above; an unbelievably choice example in brighter red on yellow parchment. One of only two notes in yellow skin-the other is in a museum collection. Incredible! Fine/VF (15,000-25,000) **PR - n/s**

THIS MONTH'S OFFERINGS - 1 OZ. SILVER



ALASKA HIGHWAY MEDALS: Since this year is the 60th Anniversary of the Alaska Highway, we thought it was time to offer our 50th Anniversary medals again. We have been sold out for a couple of years, but have acquired a very small quantity. The medal to the left is the first version. We struck only 450 of these. We have only 1 in stock @ **\$30**. The third version, to the right, has the highway lines. We have two of these in stock for **\$20**. There is an intermediate version, of which only one was struck and not available for sale.



ALASKA HIGHWAY: We have a limited supply of the Alaska Mint's 50th Anniversary medal. The last posted price we saw from them was \$150. We offered it on our last price list at \$85. Let's cut that by more than half and sell them at **\$40**.



ALASKA HIGHWAY: This is our current Alaska Highway medal, very popular with tourists that have driven the Highway. Undated to sell for years to come! Only **\$15**.



TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE: This is medal number 6, 1976-M, but it uses the reverse die from the 1975 medals. On our list at \$50, let's do **\$30** this month.



ALYESKA PIPELINE CLUB: We struck 1,000 of these a number of years ago, retained only a small quantity, and sold out. This is the first to come back in - **\$30**



CONGRESSMAN DON YOUNG: This is only the second to come our way. This was struck by the Alaska Mint. Other recent politicians on one ounce silver medals include Joe Vogler (murdered) and Jack Coghill (sort of retired).

Send orders to: A.R.C., P.O. Box 72832, Fairbanks, AK 99707. Include \$3 for shipping.